

Funding Overview

The Carol and Gene Ludwig Pilot Grant Program in Neurodegeneration will provide grants to support high-risk/high-reward research projects in promising areas of neurodegenerative disease, with the goal of building a cohort of researchers focusing on the mechanisms of neurodegeneration and translation of the new knowledge into clinically useful tools.

Funding Opportunity: Ludwig Pilot Grant

Funding Amount: Up to \$150,000 per year over 2 years. The committee is expecting to fund 2-4 projects annually. Funding will be based on merit.

Key Dates and Submission Information

Request for Application Open: January 1, 2023, and annually thereafter.

Letter of Intent: March 15, 2023, and annually thereafter (*Invitations for full applications will be sent out in April*).

Full Application: May 15, 2023, and annually thereafter.

Anticipated Award Decision: June 2023, and annually thereafter.

Project Duration: 24 months from July 1-June 30

Letters of intent and full application packages should be sent to Daniel Krug (djk2178@cumc.columbia.edu) prior to the application deadline.

Eligibility

In order to promote research collaborations, applications must be submitted by research teams consisting of two or more researchers with faculty appointments at Columbia University. Research teams should have at least two fields of research experience and expertise.

Topics of Interest

The Ludwig Family Foundation Pilot Research Program seeks applications focused on developing new knowledge about the pathobiology of neurodegenerative disease, and dementia in particular, that will enable the development of innovative tools and molecules to diagnose, monitor, and treat these diseases.

- The proposed work program must focus on neurodegenerative disease, and an emphasis on neurodegenerative dementias is especially encouraged.
- The proposed work program should be multidisciplinary, and should contain at least two independent laboratories with naturally complementary skills.
- Investigators with projects that are directed towards delivering actionable biomarkers or novel therapies in any stage of development that are based upon a valid target and have a translational/commercialization trajectory are encouraged to apply.

- Therapeutic strategies including small molecules, biologics, novel delivery approaches, gene therapy, and cell therapeutics will be considered.
- While all applications in this area are welcome, a non-restrictive set of examples include:
 - Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML) approaches and coupled validating biological studies that identify resilience factors that might: i) lead to novel biomarkers or; ii) to therapeutically actionable targets;
 - The exploitation of recent genetic studies that identify resilience alleles in risk genes;
 - Exploration of recent cellular, biological and clinical studies relating to microglial proteins with potential protective effects.

Budget

Allowable costs include:

- Personnel time and effort
- Fringe and associated personnel costs
- Direct research expenses including supplies, services, animals, etc.
- Up to \$2500 for travel to conferences to present research
- Publication costs
- Participant support costs

Unallowable costs include:

- Administrative or overhead costs
- Capital Equipment

Funding will be allocated annually up to \$150,000. Year 2 funding is contingent upon progress at the end of Year 1. Carryforward is allowable upon approval of Year 2. Separate from the funding intended to directly support the project, recipients will receive 5% indirect costs, up to \$7,500 per year.

Letter of Intent Requirements

Project team – list of personnel and research expertise.
Research description (1 page total)

Application Requirements

Proposal narrative – (5 page limit, not including references)
Detailed budget
Budget justification – (1 page)
NIH format Biosketch for all key personnel
Other support for all key personnel

Review Criteria

Impact
Collaboration
Innovation
Feasibility
Alignment with mission

Reporting Requirements

Awardees will be referred to as “Ludwig Investigators” and are required to submit annual progress reports based on the following schedule:

Year 1 Progress Report - June 30, 2024, and annually thereafter

Year 1 Financial Report

Final Progress Report

Financial Report – July 31, 2025

In addition, awardees are required to meet with the program directors on a bi-monthly basis (every other month) for 30 minutes to provide an informal update on research progress. Meetings should be followed up with a brief 1-2 paragraph summary.

Administrative Requirements

Any changes to the project team require prior approval from the committee.

Significant changes (up to 25%) to the project team’s level of effort commitment require approval from the committee.

Significant changes in the project direction require prior approval from the committee.

Key Contacts:

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